

# Jedek language

**Jedek** is an Aslian language from the Austroasiatic family first reported in 2017.<sup>[3]</sup> Jedek speakers describe themselves as ethnic Menriq or Batek to outsiders, but their language, although very closely related, is distinct from these languages.<sup>[1]</sup>

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Jedek	
Native to	Malay Peninsula
Ethnicity	Menriq; Batek
Native speakers	280 (2017) <sup>[1]</sup>
Language family	Austroasiatic <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Aslian<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Jahaic<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Eastern<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>Jedek</b></li></ul></li></ul></li></ul></li></ul>
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	<i>None</i> (mis)
Glottolog	jede1239 ( <span>http://glottolog.org/resource/language/id/jede1239</span> ) <sup>[2]</sup>

## Etymology

Jedek speakers have no autonym (endonym). Nearby Aslian speakers, particular the Jahai and Menriq, refer to them as the *Jdɛk* [ɟ̞ʷəˈdɛk̚].<sup>[1]</sup>

## Sociolinguistics

Jedek is spoken by about 280 people<sup>[4]</sup> in Sungai Rual, located on the Rual River just south of the town of Jeli in Jeli District, Kelantan state, northern Peninsular Malaysia. In the 1970s, the Malaysian government sponsored the resettlement of several bands of Semang foragers, both Jahai and Jedek speakers who roamed the middle reaches of the Pergau River, to the Sungai Rual area.<sup>[1]</sup> Today, the area comprises three hamlets and is inhabited by seven bands, of which four are primarily Jedek-speaking, and three are primarily Jahai-speaking.

The low number of Jedek speakers could lead it to being considered endangered, but several factors are ensuring that intergenerational transmission of the language is not interrupted. The Semang have a strong tradition of maintaining their unique cultural and linguistic identity while undergoing constant contact and social change. The speaker population of Jedek has grown since the 1970s, and Jedek is used in all environments by speakers of all age groups. Meanwhile, all schooling is in the national language Malay, and getting a paid job invariably means knowing Malay, the main language of communication in the areas surrounding Aslian speech communities. Although Jedek speakers have a positive attitude towards their language, the language is unrecognized by the Malaysian government, which regards the settlement area as Jahai-speaking.<sup>[1]</sup>

Traditionally, Semang communities are highly nomadic and accustomed to the breakup of groups to suit the particular conditions they were experiencing. The Semang also practice band exogamy, meaning that marriage between speakers of different languages is quite common. Due to frequent contact with

surrounding communities, Semang are typically fluent in multiple Aslian languages, and in most cases an adjacent majority language (Malay or Thai). Due to the settlement of Jedek- and Jahai-speaking bands together at Rual, most Jedek speakers have some knowledge of Jahai.

## Phonology

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### Vowels

Jedek has 9 vowels. All vowels have nasal equivalents, and Jedek demonstrates contrastive nasalization.<sup>[1]</sup>

	<u>Front</u>	<u>Central</u>	<u>Back</u>
<u>Close</u>	i	ɨ	u
<u>Close-mid</u>	e		o
<u>Mid</u>		ə	
<u>Open-mid</u>	ɛ		ɔ
<u>Open</u>	a		

### Consonants

Jedek demonstrates a typical Jahaic consonant inventory.<sup>[1]</sup>

		<u>Bilabial</u>	<u>Alveolar</u>	<u>Palatal</u>	<u>Velar</u>	<u>Glottal</u>
<u>Stop</u>	<u>voiceless</u>	p	t	c	k	ʔ
	<u>voiced</u>	b	d	ɟ	g	
<u>Fricative</u>		(ɸ)		ç		h
<u>Nasal</u>		m	n	ɲ	ŋ	
<u>Approximant</u>			l	j	w	
<u>Trill</u>			r			

The voiceless bilabial fricative /ɸ/ is a marginal consonant that occurs only in word-final position

Nasals are prestopped in word-final position when preceded by an oral vowel. Nasal consonants also cause progressive nasalization of vowels.

The rhotic consonant varies in pronunciation from the alveolar trill /r/ to the voiced uvular fricative /ʁ/. How the speaker pronounces it is dependent partially on the speaker's age: younger speakers are more likely to pronounce it closer to /r/ while older speakers are more likely to have a pronunciation closer to /ʁ/.

## References

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1. Yager & Burenhult (2007)
2. Hammarström, Harald; Forkel, Robert; Haspelmath, Martin, eds. (2017). "Jedek" (<http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/jede1239>). *Glottolog 3.0*. Jena, Germany: Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History.

3. "Language previously unknown to linguists discovered in Southeast Asia" (<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2018/02/180206100349.htm>). *ScienceDaily*. 6 February 2018. Retrieved 10 February 2018.
  4. "Unknown Language Discovered in Malaysia" (<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/unknown-language-discovered-malaysia-180968099/>). *Smithsonian*. 9 February 2018. Retrieved 10 February 2018.
- Yager, Joanne; Burtenhult, Niclas (2017). "Jedek: A newly-discovered Aslian variety of Malaysia" ([http://pubman.mpdl.mpg.de/pubman/item/escidoc:2506643/component/escidoc:2511374/Yager\\_Burtenhult\\_2017.pdf](http://pubman.mpdl.mpg.de/pubman/item/escidoc:2506643/component/escidoc:2511374/Yager_Burtenhult_2017.pdf)) (PDF). *Linguistic Typology*. **21** (3): 493–545. doi:10.1515/lingty-2017-0012 (<https://doi.org/10.1515%2Flingty-2017-0012>) – via deGruyter.

## External links

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- <http://projekt.ht.lu.se/rwaai> RWAAI (Repository and Workspace for Austroasiatic Intangible Heritage)
  - <http://hdl.handle.net/10050/00-0000-0000-0003-E6EC-7@view> Jedek in RWAAI Digital Archive
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